

FAMOUS

I'm famous because famous people know me
I'm famous because I'm always just a few decibels
louder than the rest
I'm famous because I'm ruthless
I'm famous because strangers seek my company
I'm famous because invisible television cameras follow
me to the drugstore & back
(whatever's playing on my Walkman's the soundtrack for
this movie)
I'm famous enough to wear stupid hats w/impunity
I'm famous enough to hold my head high & sigh at the
ridiculous actions of others
I'm flush with fame, feverish w/it!
I'm eagerness mixed w/languor
I'm so famous cars slow
I'm so famous ladies kibbitz in my direction
The Johnstown Flood & San Francisco Earthquake have
nothing on my notoriety
I am renowned celebrated noted distinguished & illustrious
At receptions people I don't know call me "Mr." & offer
to share their cheese
I slide by tickettakers w/a wink
Customs officials bow & whisk me past lines
On the street waiting limosines fling doors open for me
I have never even seen a restaurant check nor do I wish to
My name is writ large in fireworks that never cease
exploding
Its syllables descend w/sulfurous vapor trails from every
tongue in every coffeebar in Berkeley
How could I be so famous? celebrated? spectacular?
fabulous?
I am as famous as any fool who ever lived

SUNGLASSES

so the ultraviolet doesn't fry away my corneas
so assholes I know won't recognize me
so assholes I don't know won't recognize me
so that I may be taken for the Beatles, say, or Belmondo
so I may lust after ass freely 4 as long as it passes the
range of my vision
so the whole beach is a photograph
so strangers don't burglarize my imagination
so I can roll my eyes during endless insipid conversations
w/out the interlocutor becoming aware
so I may be safe in each necessary dishonesty
so every distance is lunar, every person a traveling statue
so in my drunkie days no one would know
so I can hide a black eye

so I can use them for mirrors to fix my hair on commuter
trains
so the night holds no surprises
so the assassin & the bodyguard may change places at will

EVERYTHING & EVERYONE VS. RICHARD BRAUTIGAN

he died with his novels stories & poems in jaundiced
paperbacks stacked on the shelves of every used
bookstore in America
he died with an empty wallet a typewriter layered in dust
he died & tidal waves of pumpkins washed ashore on the
Oregon coast
he died & every trout in Montana knew
he died & the winos of Potrero Hill lifted 5ths of Tokay
in salute
he died with his work — widely hailed abroad — derided
by all but a handful of U.S. critics
he died predeceased by the quality of mercy at the center
of all his enterprise
he died with a ghostly answering machine acting as
spokesman so the maggots could do their work
he died an officially listed suicide but was poisoned by
the alchemy of fame & a strange & terrible incomplete-
ness without which it's impossible to experience
failure's bottomless fallings
he died the angriest man in the world & the loneliest &
what he died from guns have nothing to do with

— Jim Corey

Philadelphia PA

SWEPT AWAY

— in memory of James Schuyler

He sat quietly in his little apartment,
weeping. James had been dead exactly one year,
and the anniversary was turning out
quite rough. He considered driving
to the Atlantic, but decided not to do so —
there was all the traffic he would have had to fight.

The bookshelves were quiet;
Sappho, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe,
Dickinson, Moore, Plath, Pound,
Auden, Williams, Bishop
did not call out to him. On a table,